

SYMPOSIUM ON

The Relation of the House and Its Furnishings
to the Mental, Physical and Emotional Develop-
ment of the Family.*

PAPERS PRESENTED BY

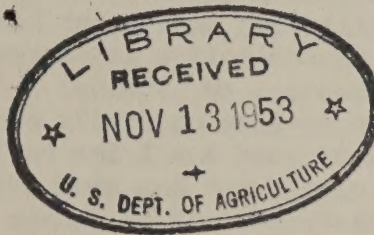
Mrs. Jack Crawford

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Paul MacAlister

Alma Heiner

B. H. Junker



DISCUSSION - - - B. H. Junker

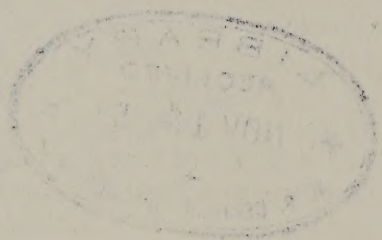
*Papers presented at National Home Furnishings Conference, Extension Service, USDA, Chicago, Illinois., April 27, 1953, by members of symposium.

SYMPOSIUM ON

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to the Mental, Physical and Emotional Development
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- Mrs. Jack Crawford
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- Paul MacAllister
- Alma Nelson
- E. E. Johnson



DISCUSSION - - - E. E. Johnson

Program presented at National Home Furnishings Conference, Extension Service,
U.S.D.A., Chicago, Illinois, April 21, 1933, to members of extension.

THE RELATION OF THE HOUSE AND ITS
FURNISHINGS TO THE MENTAL, PHYSICAL AND
EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE FAMILY

by

Mr. Jack Crawford, Farmer*
Swayzee, Indiana

I am very happy this afternoon to have this opportunity to appear on this panel with such distinguished members as Paul MacAlister, Buford Junker and Alma Heiner, and my good wife. All my life I've wanted to appear on a panel discussion, but never have I dreamed of such an opportunity as this one today. I am sure that all of you already know more than I about the subject that we are to discuss because I know that all of you are specialists in your line. When I tried to think of a title for myself that would sound real nice, I had trouble finding anything suitable for a long time, except just a "Hoosier Farmer". But now I've thought of something that sounds real important like. I'm a "Home Observer" and most certainly not a "home furnishing expert". For many years I have been a home observer and didn't know it. In the early years of my life I went with my Dad's threshing outfit, and who may I ask, do you think would have a better opportunity to see and judge home facilities than I? In later years I have been in many homes doing solicitations for Church, Farm Bureau, Red Cross, and as a 4-H Leader. We represent a large group of rural folk. My discussion this afternoon will be based on the rural homes that I know best. Mrs. Crawford and I are here today because we have been fortunate in having a nice farm home and two lovely children. Our daughter Jean is a Junior in Purdue's school of Home Economics and Tom is entering the school of Agriculture this fall at Purdue. Now, I hope that we will be able, as simple farm folks, to extend some thoughts to you, you who are doing such wonderful work, that will be helpful to other people.

My first thought about our subject today of The Relation of the House and its Furnishings to the Mental, Physical, and Emotional development of the family would be how having brings responsibilities. Homes, Babies, Gardens, and Community Activities each add new responsibilities and how they do pile up? As they pile up how much more we prize our freedom. No, I don't mean freedom from other lands nor freedom from other people. Neither do I mean freedom from our neighbors nor freedom from our families, but freedom from our own responsibilities. How much would we give if we could add a day to our weeks or sometimes even an hour to our days? Modern home furnishings certainly have done that.

I can easily see that there are many things that need to be incorporated in farm homes to keep them on an equal, with modern farm machinery. Some people I know have put too much emphasis on making money and not enough on

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living. Here is a statement that is my own, that I believe to be true. No matter what you have done for yourself, you will be remembered for what you did for others.

I like this story about putting, first things first, about the young married couple who had a very sick and fretful baby. One night, after the mother had been up several times caring for the little one, trying to quiet it and make it more comfortable the father exclaimed "Can't you keep that kid still?" Minutes later the father jumped out of bed, jerked on his clothes and rushed out of the house. Later when he returned his good wife asked, "Why? John, were you in such a rush when you left the house a while ago? Why! didn't you hear that pig squeal? That was one of those thorbreds."

I don't like to think that this is a true story but anyway there is a point there. Now every farm home that I know has some kind of washing machine but the ones who have the poorest washer may have the newest modern rubber tired farm equipment power. How many women do you know that would refuse to accept community responsibilities that occurred on Monday just because that was wash day? This is a freedom that one of our modern pieces of equipment the "automatic washer" has made possible.

At our house when we got our first tractor, out went the old coal and wood cook stove. What a freedom that was. Then as the second and third tractors came an automatic washer, dryer, and ironer found their way into our home. We might go on and name all of the modern farm helps along with all of the new home furnishings that could be bought and still we might not have the balance that is so necessary to the emotional development of the family.

To all of you who are home furnishings experts, I know you will agree with me when I say that so far as our physical development is concerned it is comparatively simple. However, our emotional side of life is much more complicated. It is made up largely of the little things that we like or dislike that constantly surround us, either annoying us or pleasing us. I would like to give you a good example. Mrs. Crawford is a wonderful wife and mother, but there are some little things that occur that tend to cause her some emotional unrest. She is a good housekeeper from upstairs to the garage, but Tom and I are sometimes a bit careless, especially with our work clothes and boots. We have been known to come in to the utility room and kick off our muddy boots most anywhere, and drape other furnishings with dirty, smelly clothes. Now I don't think that we are the only men that do such foolish tricks but boy! are we in bad when Mom sees what we've done.

I think maybe she was right in getting a bit upset over this extra work that was so unnecessary. In fact we have developed a home made gadget that helps us all in keeping our clothes in order. The clothes are placed on hangers, so that they can air. Boots and shoes are placed in order so that they air instead of putting them in a heap in the corner. I want that,

this one tip, about a work saver, might be passed on to others, because it adds a few more minutes to each day, which gives a little more freedom in our lifetime.

It seems to be, "lack of time" that robs us of our personal freedom. It often keeps us from doing for others. It is the thing that often upsets us emotionally. It is the thing that contributes many times to ones failures. So lets add to the labor saving, time saving, woman saving, home saving devices and furnishings. So that we will have more

time to live; for it is the secret of success
more time to think; for it is the source of power
more time to play; for it is the secret of youth
more time to read; for it is the foundation of knowledge
more time for friendship; for it is the course of happiness
more time to laugh; for it helps to lift lifes load
more time to dream; for it hitches the soul to a star
more time for God; for it is life's only lasting investment.

Extension Service
U. S. Dept. of Agr.
Washington 25, D. C.

THE RELATION OF THE HOUSE AND ITS
FURNISHINGS TO THE MENTAL, PHYSICAL AND
EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE FAMILY*

by

Mrs. Jack Crawford, Homemaker
Swayzee, Indiana

As a farmer's wife, mother and homemaker, it is good to express the effects the home and furnishings has on my family.

More parents should assume responsibility of providing better homes, ones that have modern devices and have been made beautiful with color.

We are all born with a sense of pride for wanting families happy and that sense must be preserved. We have operated on the theory that the purposes of our home would be to provide a haven of comfort and beauty for our family and friends.

In 1942, we bought our farm. The house was non-descript and seldom would have rated a second glance. It is the place where my father and his six brothers and sisters had been reared. Then, it was far from the home of our dreams. However, through working together we have made it into a home which reflects our personalities and activities.

We wanted to make this home comfortable, friendly, and healthful. Since the farm homemaker is the housekeeper, laundress, raises chickens, gardens, keeps the books and helps with the community activities, we must have furnishings that are easily cared for.

We started planning how we could transform this house to fit our needs and contribute to the mental physical and emotional growth of the family.

The kitchen is the heart of the home. This room should be well equipped and arranged. There should be an area for easy food preparation and a space for family eating. Then the utility room is a most useful space. That is the location for the laundry.

The screened porch is our out door living room and we eat there in summer. Another area that is used a great deal is the family room, it is multi-purpose one. It serves as a living room, study hall, business office, serving shop, playroom and may be used as an extra bedroom.

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The living room and dining area were carpeted so that made this area appear cozy and restful. We have no need for a formal dining room.

We have made the rooms friendly and cheerful with the use of nature's colors. We have added interesting bits of color through the use of china, linen and house plants. Our picture window we thoroughly enjoy for it brings the outdoors indoors.

A child is a "God flower" it must have a healthy body, happy mind, and live in a home free of emotional disturbance, then it will grow into a mature adult.

We are all glad that we have yesterday's space used with today's ideas, for it is the place for the development of our family.

THE RELATION OF THE HOUSE AND ITS
FURNISHINGS TO THE MENTAL, PHYSICAL AND
EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE FAMILY*

by

B. H. Junker
Sociologist and Anthropologist
Chicago, Illinois

As the "social scientist" appointed to this Symposium, I should define my role...the part I hope I may be permitted to play in this more or less impromptu drama...

The role of a social scientist necessarily involves a certain kind of detachment. If ever he is a "participant" in any on-going social process--from an interview to a study of a community or a nation -- he is something of a masquerader...deliberately playing a role in order to learn what he needs to learn to help along the development of his science, the body of knowledge he shares with his own professional colleagues and any other citizens who may join in the enterprise for the advancement of knowledge. If he plays this role in an ethical fashion, in my opinion he "lays it on the line" just what he is up to, and he waits for his audience to put him in his place. If the social scientist is really interested in learning -- which means the work of observing -- he will be patient until something happens naturally that gives him his cues for his part of role in terms of which he participates in the on-going developmental social process he is interested in. No matter how it turns out - "the scientist never loses" - that is, never fails to learn.

Enough has happened already to give me, as social scientist, some minimal cues. I hope that I am reading them correctly, and that it will be acceptable to you all for me to follow this plan: first,

1. I propose to deliver a very brief "lecturette" on the subject: "A Social Scientist Looks at 'Taste' and 'Human Development'";
2. Second, and more important, I propose to make so bold as to put some "tags" or "labels" on the major themes developed by my colleagues in this Symposium. And this labeling of themes will, I hope, serve us all in the pursuit and grasping of the very complicated kinds of knowing, in feeling, and learning which are implied by our topic today: "The Relation of the House and Its Furnishings to the Mental, Physical, and Emotional Development of the Family" (surely the longest title for a Symposium ever devised!)

Depending on the time I am allowed, I shall try to do both 1 and 2 before our intermission. If necessary, perhaps I could reserve my discussion of the themes developed in our Symposium to an introduction for the discussion period.

*Paper presented at National Home Furnishings Conference, Chicago, Illinois, April 27, 1953.

A SOCIAL SCIENTIST LOOKS AT "TASTE"
AND "HUMAN DEVELOPMENT"

If we let "taste" stand for "what makes the individual make choices" --- and today we are interested in "what makes the individual make choices in regard to home furnishings (especially living room furnishings)" --- it would be obvious that knowledge of this sort would provide a most powerful set of tools for research and action in all the areas of "human development" that interest us.

I believe that we are in a position today to say a good deal about "The Social Determination of 'Taste' in Home Furnishings." Some of my colleagues are better prepared than I to declare that we can also say a good deal about "The Psychological Determination of 'Taste'" in such matters as living room arrangements. In some studies we have been able to put the two together, and obtain some insight into the workings of "Taste" in "Human Development". If we let "psychological determination" stand for the processes that make you "WHAT YOU ARE", there are studies that show relations between "What You Are" and your "Consumer Preferences" for example. If we let "social determination stand for "WHO YOU ARE," there are studies which show relations between "Who You Are" and "What You Are" --- that is, relations between "life styles" or ways of living in different socio-economic groups, and "personality formation" --- the psychological aspect of individual human development. Therefore, within limits, it becomes possible to say that "WHO YOU ARE" (socially) predicts "WHAT YOU LIKE" because it also predicts "WHAT YOU ARE."

But there is at least one missing link in all these studies. To me, this missing link is indicated by the question: WHAT DO THE REAL THINGS THAT PEOPLE PREFER HAVE IN COMMON, AND WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCES AMONG REAL THINGS ABOUT WHICH PEOPLE MAKE DISCRIMINATIONS (that is, exercise their "taste")?

Taking living room furnishings and arrangements as a test case, I think it is fair to say of all of those who are interested, one way or another, in this sort of thing, that the following statements are true:

- the artists, the designers, and other creative people are really not much interested in a scientific approach: they usually want to get on with their own tasks of "making".
- the social scientists, as a rule, don't know much about art or design; they deal mainly in verbal or literary expressions or products; they want to get on with their own tasks of writing books, recording interviews, lecturing, etc.
- the philosophers and estheticians are not really interested either in art or science as such; they want to get on with their business of dealing with "great ideas" and "fine arts".
- the psycho-physicists (people who are interested in the relatively new field of psychophysics - e.g. "The Science of Color" by the Committee on Colorimetry of the American Optical Society)--- these people tend to be either physicists or psychologists; so far as I know, they have yet to produce an effective hybrid.

The people who come closest to the approach that intrigues me are those concerned mainly with education in the broadest sense: these include the present audience, as well as writers of textbooks on home furnishings such as Anna Hong Rutt (pronounced ROOT); writers concerned with art museums --- Thomas Munro, for example; people who are active in the fields of merchandising, market research, advertising, sales promotion, etc. --- I believe that all these people, in their various ways, are seeking to understand "taste" in somewhat the same way I am seeking to understand it.... NOT "taste" in the high-flown terms of "good taste" or "appreciation of the Fine Arts" so much as "taste" in terms of the factual everyday things that people do in selecting, arranging, and using dwellings and furnishings.

--- I have gone on like this without really defining what I mean by the word "taste." But I am sure that we all know what is involved. We know that there is probably no word like "taste" for arousing feelings and social attitudes such as those associated with being or acting like "the local Social Arbiter" --- a kind of Emily Post or a certain kind of community leader. Opposed to these sentiments are those attitudes expressing resentment against "Snobbism." Let us try to be objective about "Taste." I am not talking about this word's restricted meaning, as in the phrase "Good Taste." I am not talking about "refined discrimination" or "conformity to some ideal or dogma in art or conduct" (cf. article on "Taste" in the Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, by Meyer Schapiro). I am using "taste" to refer to that which is expressed in any or all of the "choices" made by all kinds of people whose home furnishings and arrangements interest us.

My own interest in all this stems from the gradual realization that when I do my own proper work of studying social organization, community life, institutional arrangements or broadly, human relations and human development, I am sensitive to subliminal cues in the physical setting, and I "learn" something from the living room, the classroom, the factory setting, the prison cell, the sharecropper's cabin (inside and outside), or the formal setting of the party in the mansion on the hill... I learn something that social scientists, by and large, rarely report and study. (Some anthropologists who report on primitive tribes would provide exceptions to this). I would like to read you a brief extract from Eliel Saarinen's "Search for Form" (New York, 1948) to illustrate this kind of "learning":

"In the field of anthropology, writers before and since Franz Boas have coped with the description and meaning of artifacts used by man in society, especially in the simpler societies. Anthropologists using tools from various schools of 'dynamic psychology' (not to mention students of 'dynamic psychology' investigating personality formations in simpler societies) have explored the cultural conditioning of perception in some of its manifestations, such as that in Indian children on the Northwest Coast who 'perceive' an animal as a culturally-defined arrangement of body parts rather than as an object to be represented in the conventional naturalistic way of Western civilization. Culturally-conditioned perception comes close to what the writer has in mind in using the term 'taste in home furnishings.'"

The approach of the social anthropologists (especially W. Lloyd Warner) to the study of symbolic behavior also offers fruitful leads for this inquiry. Writers in the fields of philosophy, aesthetics, art criticism, and in areas even more remote from sociology are, of course, legion. For purposes of this summary statement, they may be said to range from Edgar Allen Poe's, *Philosophy of Furniture* 1840, an outspoken would-be arbiter of "taste" with a strong attachment to certain English styles, through Roger Fry's *Vision and Design*, London, 1925; C. K. Ogden, I. A. Richards, and James Wood *The Foundations of Aesthetics*, New York, 1925; to Susanne K. Langer's *Philosophy in a New Key*, Harvard, 1942 and Eliel Saarinen's *Search for Form*, New York, 1948. The last of these provides an appropriate comment for this research:

"The spiritual quality of any form rests within its expressive proportion and rhythm. Because of this, it makes no difference which form we select as the object of our examination. We might, however, arrive closest to the roots of the problem, if we select the most generally used form; namely, that form which not only meets a general demand, but constitutes even an indispensable everyday necessity for everyone. It is the space of protection that everyone is compelled to establish about himself.

It is the 'room.'

Really, the 'room' is the most indispensable form-problem in civilized human life. It is so, for most of life takes place within the four walls of the room. In the room, the various phases of life are blended into a colorful complexity of joy and sorrow, of aim and passion; into a 'Humana Comedia' --- the most intimate of all the performances of man. ...Therefore, the room is the sanctuary of man's life and work. And the essence of the room --- aura of the room --- is that environment, constituted by means of proportion and rhythm, which bestows upon man its spiritual atmosphere.

It must be understood, however, that when we speak about the 'room' in the above sense, we do not mean a space-formation of just four bare walls. We mean a space-formation of organic integrity, including all the features that make of the room an adequate place for proper human existence.

As such, the room radiates its influence.

When a person enters a room, in one way or another he is influenced by the room. Either he feels comfortable, or he feels uncomfortable. But, if sensitive enough, he seldom feels indifferent. In case he is conscious of the spiritual atmosphere of his environment, the room can satisfy him only insofar as the room-atmosphere is in accord with his personality. If such is not the case, and he is forced in spite of this to dwell in the room, he might be able to undertake such rearrangements as could suit his well-being, physical and spiritual. By so doing, he might strengthen the kinship between the room and himself.

We may feel at home in a room by just rearranging a few odd things. Or perhaps there is need of major changes. Or perhaps all our efforts are in vain, and we are forced to move out because the room is fundamentally in disagreement with our ego. On the other hand, if our ego does not agree with the spirit of the room, and we are able in spite of this gradually to feel content with the room --- without making any changes --- our ego then is moulded to correspond to the spirit of the room. In such a case the influence of the room is stronger than our character. And our character is improved or depraved, depending on whether the room is esthetically --- or why not say 'ethically' --- on a higher or lower level than we are ourselves.

A person sensitive to proportion and rhythm feels distinctly these qualities in the room. He is "musical" with regard to space. He is like the person able to enjoy music because of his sensitiveness to cadence, rhythm, and color in music. But as nearly everyone is able to whistle a melody, so is nearly everyone more or less sensitive to the 'music' of the room."

Saarinen's concept of "the room" includes, he adds, any piece of art: "furniture, textiles, painting, sculpture, and objects of all kinds --- all together, and each individually" must be reckoned with because "Any piece or art is bound to have its location in some embracing space." ("Search for Form," p. 127 and the following pages.)

Many of Saarinen's ideas suggest sociological meanings which need to be clarified: the "room" as "an adequate place for proper human existence"; "the kinship between the room" and the person; the "room" and its influence upon "character" --- the latter suggesting relations between "esthetic" and "ethical" standards in society as a moral order, though without going to Tolstoi's extreme of making "Beauty" a moral matter, perhaps. Saarinen's discussion is heavily oriented toward the Individual and his psychology, but is nevertheless suggestive for formulating the sociologist's view of "what to look for."

This illustrates the kind of insight which I should like to see find its way into the social sciences. The initial question for me continues to be: How can we, as social scientists, learn more about the cultural, social, and psychological meanings of dwelling interiors and furnishings arrangements?

Let me now turn to a very brief sketch of some results of my own and others' studies of communities, socio-economic groupings in their populations, and broad "taste levels."

In many studies of American communities (in New England, in the Southern States, in the Midwest, on the Coast, and so on), we have found broad socio-economic differences among the people. Some of these communities --- the older, more established ones --- have well-defined social classes or subdivisions of "upper", "middle" and "lower" status. In many such communities --- and I believe Chicago is one of them --- about 65% of the families are "lower-middle" and "upper-lower" class. I once labeled these as composing "the middle majority," as a title somewhat more appropriate, I think, than "the common man." This is the critical grouping for many purposes: the "mass market" so-called is right here, for one thing.

Now, at the same time that one can distinguish these "class levels", one can also find, in a given community, some broad "taste levels." In one large, representative Midwestern city, I found - I was more convinced at the time than I am right now! - really only five broad "taste levels" as expressed in their living room furnishings and arrangements, and I called these:

from the "top down"

from the "bottom up"

Complex Harmonious
(sometimes with lineage)

Simple Improvised
(or just cluttered)

Simple Harmonious antiques

Simple Utilitarian
(e.g. farm laborer family
become factory wage earners)

and right in the middle:

Complex-Fancy

(e.g. - antimacassars and
much floral pattern in wall
paper or rugs or what-not
shelves or all at once.
INCIDENTALLY: the fancy lamps
in picture windows in the Chicago
area are probably the "new" or
"youthful" expression of the same
old Complex-Fancy "taste").

I also found sub-types within these 5 broad "taste-levels" and additional researches could doubtless refine them very much further than I did.

But meanwhile I have come to the conclusion that this is not the right track for a social scientist interested in "taste and human development". For one thing, this approach leads to reasoning in a circle instead of reasoning in a spiral. The finding of "taste levels" corresponding to socio-economic levels is nothing new: over 30 years ago F. Stuart Chapin at Minnesota and many others elsewhere have constructed what they call "Scales of Socio-Economics Status" based upon home furnishings, especially "living room equipment." That is, they used these to predict from an inventory of home equipment to what a given family's socio-economic status would be. So, if you design some way to classify home furnishings arrangements along the lines of "Simple Harmonious," "Complex Fancy" etc., all you are doing is to turn the thing around - i.e., reverse the reasoning within the same old circle. You "build in" class differences into your types of home arrangements. You find out just what you planned to find out! (E.g. - In window treatments: "emphasis on drapes" or "framing the window" is higher status behavior than "emphasis on glass curtains.")

"Reasoning in a spiral" suggests following a line of research that permits you to discover something new and also requires you to state much more economically what is already known. For example, so long as some socio-economic differences persist in our civilization, people are going to continue to come from different backgrounds and as home-makers themselves they are going to

try to keep alive some of the traditions and continuities that are socially valuable and psychologically comfortable for them, no matter who tries to make them "change." (Remember the picture-window lamps and their serving as substitutes for anti-macassars or the like). This means that in some as yet unexplained way people "sense" what is right for them --- and they choose it --- that is, they exercise their taste for it.

To wind this up, I go back to ~~one~~ of the first questions I started with in this talk: the question about the missing link:

WHAT DO THE REAL THINGS THAT PEOPLE PREFER HAVE IN COMMON, AND WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCES AMONG REAL THINGS ABOUT WHICH PEOPLE MAKE DISCRIMINATIONS (OR "EXERCISE THEIR TASTE")?

I shall not have time today to discuss my research attempts to follow out the implications of this question. I wish this were not so, because I know that from you I could learn a very great deal. But now I must turn to Part II of my presentation: an attempt to identify and label the very important themes developed in our Symposium so far. I hope that when I have done this, we may take our intermission and return to a discussion period in which all will feel free to participate.

THE RELATION OF THE HOUSE AND ITS
FURNISHINGS TO THE MENTAL, PHYSICAL AND
EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE FAMILY*

by

Alma Heiner, Interior Decorator
John Colby & Sons
Chicago, Illinois

I want to say how happy I am to be here - to see so many familiar faces and also, as I told Dorothy Iwig, when she first asked me to talk, that I should be so happy to talk at a meeting of this type because I am so glad of the type of things that you folks are trying to do and I feel that it certainly is a step in the right direction.

As far as my part in this program is concerned, I feel that it is a matter of trying to tell you how I work with people in order to try to develop those things from the standpoint of the mental, physical and emotional development in people. I work with all kinds of people and I am sure that most of you have some of the same problems with people and, of course, even though I am not talking from the standpoint of actually having done one house, or working with one family, I feel that I have to have many different ways of thinking of these problems of furnishings. Of course I have to have established in my own mind what I think of as a home and what things should go into that home.

First, I would like to say that the appearance of the home should be worthy of the person, to provide a place for the promotion of the spiritual, intellectual and physical growth of the family, as well as to furnish a shelter for them, and my one reason for saying that particular thing is that frequently people will come in and ask for help in the furnishing of their homes. One of the first things they will say is: "Now, we have just built a new home and we don't have much money to furnish it". And, of course, not realizing what the furnishings apparently mean toward making that a real home; apparently they have not gone into the planning of that furnishing as much as they did into the building of that house, which is really just a mere shell, if it doesn't have the things in it that it should have. I would say that the ultimate goal of a successful home is the integration of these three objectives: First, that it have beauty; secondly, that it has a definite way of expressing the ideas and types of things that those people want to live with and third, it must be functional - and I am going to use those three things in relation to discussing the things of mental and emotional and physical development of the furnishing. I would say that beauty has to do definitely with the mental.

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In other words, as I think of it, the mental is really the intellectual procedure. It has to do with the esthetic, of course, and when we think of the esthetic, we naturally have to think in terms of the why and the how of doing things. We do think in terms of the esthetic oftentimes - I would say - just as to color, or, for instance, oftentimes people will say, "Oh, she has such good taste", not realizing that it is something more than just an innate sense of good taste. That person probably has put a lot of time and energy and thought into the why and how to do things, and I feel, of course, that's the thing I have to constantly do as I am working with people, trying to get those things into their minds as to how and why we are doing things. Frequently, I will have people say to me: "Oh, I never thought about that!" And that in itself shows that they are not thinking in terms of what and how they can use their furniture more effectively. If people knew a little bit more about why and what to do, they would have much more a feeling of assurance, of rightness, and I believe that most everyone likes to have that feeling that what they have done is correct, or is good. It may not always be good for someone else, but it is at least, according to their way of living, it is good. And, if they have actually thought the thing through from that standpoint and not just go ahead and buy a lamp and a table to put in front of the picture window they are going to have much more interesting homes. The same thing, of course, is true in the use of color. If we select individual colors to express the individuals who are going to live there, also we might select a certain color because it fits in a certain room, or a certain exposure. In other words, I'm trying to say that if we can give the people the feeling that if they know why and, of course in the type of homes that we are building today, we certainly have to think in terms of texture of our fabrics and, in fact, all materials that are being used in the building of our homes require certain types of textures in the material that we use to furnish those homes and texture today is a very important word from the standpoint of decorating because texture is so important from the standpoint of fashion. The use of pattern. There are many people who come in and want help in furnishing, who never stop to think about what pattern can do; how it can take up things or how it might sometimes increase the size of a room, or it might be a matter of warming up and giving it a feeling of friendliness, etc. So, if we can do something to help people to see some of those things for themselves, they will be much more appreciative of it. Then, another thing that I find so important from the standpoint of knowing why and how, and that is the use of shapes and sizes of the furnishings. Today, the size of our furniture has to be changed a great deal in many cases. The homes are built on an entirely different scale. I can't say that they are all smaller, because certainly some of those big ranch-type houses are very large and spacious, but we don't have the type of houses certainly that the Crawfords were talking about that their home is today, and so if we can help people to select and think in terms of the size and shape of the piece of furniture in relation to the place in which they are going to use that - in the house or in a certain room. I might give as an example of the knowing of why and what of some of these things, a woman one day called me frantically and said: "I wonder if you folks could help me. I have just gone through furnishing a 7 room house and I am simply sick - I don't know what to do".

And, of course, the answer that I had to give her was obvious - that after the deed is done, I don't know what we could do other than to perhaps help her in spending more money to do the thing in the right way and to start by doing some planning before she actually goes ahead and does any of the actual selection and furnishing of it. Another example that I find frequently people will ask, and that is about the mixing of periods in furniture and so often they will come in and say, well I have certain period furniture, thinking that they must continue with that; not realizing that they might get various periods as long as there is something to hold the different things together and the ideas together, and oftentimes they will feel that they can't possibly put a certain type of wood into a certain type of house, or maybe because they have a certain number of antique pieces, they feel that they can't put any of the newer pieces of furniture into that house at all, not realizing that wood can be mixed. We don't have the same kind of wood when you go out to the forest - you don't have all the same kinds of woods in that forest, and so I say you don't have to have the same kind of wood in every piece of furniture, but you do have to have something that is going to make that thing tie up with something else in the room. It might be again a matter of how and why you use these. Sometime it might be even more interesting if you will combine some of the different woods to make a little more interesting effect - maybe by way of color; maybe by way of texture. Frequently I have someone come in and say, "I want something in Walnut bedroom furniture". They go on and say "it's almost impossible to find". So, there, you see, we have to try and help them to find something and to satisfy them that it is the right thing to put together. Then, from the standpoint of expressiveness, I feel that that ties up very well with the emotional development. Webster says that the emotional has to do with any one of the states designated as fear, anger, disgust, grief, joy, surprise, etc. Well, there are many times that people frantically come to us and say, "I can't possibly use that". They're just scared to death for fear they have the wrong thing, and so we have to try to assure them that the combination is a good one and it's because they do not know the why they wanted it. And, we always say that, of course, expressiveness is the power to excite the emotional response and oftentimes we will hear people come into a home and they will say, "Oh, isn't this wonderful - the color", or the light, and of course that is the thing that we have to try to help people to see too. Now, many times people themselves do not have a feeling for color. Maybe they have always been afraid of using color and, of course, they are afraid to not only use it because they don't know about it, but they are afraid of what their neighbors or someone else might say. Frequently, I have a customer say "Well, now you say I should use so-and-so - but I have had a sister-in-law (or I have had an aunt or someone else) tell me that I should use a lot of patterns or a lot of color". Now, then I always answer them in this way. Does that person have any other experience of working with color or pattern, etc., other than in her own home? Is she thinking of it in terms of your home, or is she thinking of it only in terms of her own home? So there again I say that if we can help people to see that they can go on their own - they don't have to do what someone else does, just because someone else does it. So perhaps we might have suggestions to make to those people to give them that feeling of

assurance that what they are doing is right. Now, of course, there are many, many different ideas that we can express. First of all, we might say that the home should have a feeling of repose. It might be a feeling of strength, it might be to express the feeling of youth or maturity. I always think of this one example of people coming in to ask for modern furniture. Not long ago I had a woman come in. She was, I would say, in her sixties - closer perhaps to her seventies - and she said: "I am furnishing my entire house in modern furniture, and she was having a terrible time trying to do just the right thing. She finally admitted that she was going thru that terrible stage of trying to become acquainted and trying to live with this modern furniture. To become adjusted to that is an awfully big job, when you've been used to certain other things over that long a period of time and, so of course I tried to show her all the possible things that she might do.

Then the third thing as our objective is to make things functional and that, of course, has to do with the physical. Now many things may be very attractive, interesting; but they may not function as the individual wants it to function. And, of course, when we speak of the furniture functioning, we think in terms of the individual who is going to use it. First of all, a chair - there may be many kinds of chairs that a person may select, but if it is too deep; if it is too high; if it's too low, it isn't going to function for her. Then, another thing, it may be that it doesn't function as far as the relationship of one piece of furniture to the other. For instance, a table in relation to a sofa - a table in relation to a chair - if it doesn't function for her, or for him, it isn't good. Then, of course, we also have to think in terms of the functioning of the grouping of furniture. Will it allow itself to be grouped in such a way as to make it comfortable for the individuals using it and also will it be comfortable from the standpoint of conversation or group thinking. Then, since my time is about up, I will skip over some of these things and say this: That the development of the family, of course, means simply a better working together; a better understanding of each and every member of the family and an individual expression and group expression of all concerned.

Discussion:

- Q. In a new house, should furnishings be planned before house is built?
- A. Yes. Furnishings give a setting for the development of the family. If families knew the why and how of doing things they would have a better feeling why they did it.
- Q. Should people feel free to express themselves?
- A. People should feel free to express themselves and not be afraid.

THE RELATION OF THE HOUSE AND ITS
FURNISHINGS TO THE MENTAL, PHYSICAL AND
EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE FAMILY*

by

Paul MacAlister
Interior Designer
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Thank you, Mr. Junker Ladies and Gentleman, Just as the 20th Century Limited first roared into Chicago, in 1902 - twenty hours out of New York - today's jet liner is capable of breaking the sound barrier between Chicago and London in less than nine hours: This is a fair, and vivid, comparison between the background for living today and 50 years ago.

Shocking and remote as this simile may seem to you, I think that if you consider the matter, you will agree that this illustrates the rapid change in our mode of living, which is the basic reason for our gathering together at this present Conference.

And, since we are in business together for the next few minutes, let me pass on to you some observations that I hope will assist you in your effort to help the families and youth of America take advantage of the new ways of living which conform to the needs of this century.

We are agreed that the primary function of the home is the protection and development of the family unit on which our society is founded, as well as the individual. The word home of course, implies many subjects that contribute to family and individual life, but I am going to speak of the structure which creates the "background for living". What I am going to say to you concerns the suburban and country house, rather than the town dwelling - as the trend of our generation is away from the urban centers, and toward the dispersion of both dwelling and commercial units. This trend stems not only from reasons of economy, but for the defense and protection of the family and industry.

The most appropriate place to start this part of the discussion is with "space" ... for the home actually consists of a pre-determined area, protected and enclosed by four walls, a floor and ceiling - or roof. This "space" is further treated by division into various areas, or rooms, to suit the number of occupants, their ages and activities.

No matter what the actual size of this house may be, the cost depends upon the family income and the selection and use of materials and utilities. For the average American family of moderate means, this cost can be controlled to fit the budget by the wise choice of materials - added to the fact that the trend in structural materials is toward ease of handling and installation; factory finished materials; and even knock-down construction methods. All this makes it possible for the owner, if he so desires, to do much of

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the actual building and installation himself. This even applies to those families who are far-sighted enough to invest in the services of a registered architect, and an experienced contractor.

Speaking not only as a professional, but as a Scotsman who appreciates the value of a dollar, I would like to urge all of you, in your work with the ultimate consumer, to stress the economy of relying upon the architect, rather than the builder, in the creation of a truly successful home.

But, back to the treatment of space. The dwelling, designed for present-day use, may consist of just two - or many - rooms. In general, it comprises one very large area, combining the functions of entrance, living and dining rooms, with that of the library, music room and so on. In other words, a generous, multi-purpose living area which is surrounded by other small rooms that call for privacy, such as the bedroom and bath. There is a noticeable trend toward the inclusion of the kitchen in this multi-purpose room. Because of the manner in which we now live and maintain our homes, the kitchen and laundry are losing their individual identity, and are becoming a part of the general living areas. This combining of areas is a direct outgrowth of our attitude toward family life, where every age group takes an active part in nearly all activities.

In addition our approach toward entertaining has also undergone a great revolution which gives impetus to this trend. After all, the homemaker who combines the role of wife and mother, with that of cook, janitor and general factotum, has no sympathy with the protocol followed by the hostess of other days. She entertains while she cooks and serves; she cleans house while she cares for her children; she acts the part of factory foreman as she utilizes all the mechanical devices and takes advantage of all the man-made materials which go to make up her home. Ease of maintenance and consolidation of facilities is a basic part of architectural and interior design today.

In line with this evaluation of space, the new house is seeking a single level - thus eliminating time consuming, excess appendages such as endless flights of stairs, the attic and the basement. This does not, however, mean that the house is on one level only. Several levels, joined by ramps or a few steps, are used in order to conform to the land, as well as to create a visual break between various activity areas of the home.

As a further treatment of space, there is a tendency to expand the apparent area of the house by a clever blending of interior with exterior. This goes far beyond the decorative ruse of "bringing the outdoors, indoors", so beloved of the magazines a few short years ago. New methods of heating and insulation have made vast expanses of glass areas practical in every part of the country, thus opening new vistas in every room.

Now, let's investigate some of the changes that have occurred in the basic elements of this house..... Starting from the base there's THE FLOOR.

With the disappearance of the basement, the foundation and thus the floor itself, is most likely to be a poured concrete slab - into which are incorporated the heating system, telephone and electric cables, piping for water, gas and so on. Of course there is also wall and ceiling radiant heat supplies.

This radiant heated floor may be covered in a variety of ways to suit the tastes and activities of the family.

For instance, there are "tile" and "sheet" coverings of many kinds, ranging through asphalt, cork, rubber and plastic - to a new and luxurious all-wood parquetry square. All of these can be installed by the home-owner for today's radiant heated floor. Each of these materials have individual properties and qualities that recommend them for specific cases. The color range is wide; and the decorative effects that are obtainable by combining color and installation pattern, is limited only by imagination. In addition, there is an increasing use of "natural" materials for interiors, such as slate and stone flagging. Effective use of ceramic tile and brick is also to be found..... These "natural" materials, are easy to maintain indoors and also capable of withstanding the elements, and can be effectively continued from the interior floor surface to an outdoor terrace. This device gives visual size to a room and produces a pleasing illusion.

A revolution is also occurring in the decorative rug and carpet treatment of the floor area in the new house. Wall to wall carpeting with its insulating and sound-absorbing qualities, is still to be recommended for the vintage house. But, with radiant heat, plus the installation of easy-to-maintain flooring of beautiful color and texture, the expanse of all-over carpeting is not necessary. Rather, small and luxurious decorative rugs are strategically placed to define activity areas and add the warmth and charm of contrasting color and texture.

Letting our eyes wander upwards, we find that even the walls have undergone a radical change. Today's dry-wall construction can eliminate the costly need for exterior veneering with stone, brick or stucco, and interior surfacing with rough or smooth plaster. Just think of the economy of this type of wall construction, both in material and labor - it staggers the imagination:

So much for the load bearing perimeter of the house....

Interior wall separations such as we have used up until now, no longer suit our way of life, nor the materials available to us. Permanent interior walls are now only used to segregate those areas such as sleeping quarters - where full privacy is a must. Even these "permanent" walls are apt to be unlike those of a decade ago. Hollow tile, which is permanently finished on one side may be decoratively treated on the back to form the background of the adjoining room. Glass and mirror, plastic and other permanently finished materials are available to carry out any desired scheme. Pre-finished wood paneling, split stone facing, wallpaper and paint can all be selected.

Many interior walls today are storage walls. Their dual-function takes the place of the inconvenient attic and basement of the past, as well as creates the required wall area for furniture backgrounds. Other interior "walls" that meet today's needs, are dividers of many materials, which are strategically placed to form a break between activity areas. Movable dividers in the form of sliding screens and folding doors make it possible to expand areas, or enclose them as the need arises.

In many ways, our approach to the combination of permanent and movable walls, follows the theories employed in the Far East for many centuries. Our modified social manners no longer require a separated dining room of formality, although certain occasions still call for segregation of this area. Nor do we require an imposing foyer and entrance hall... we only need sufficient, partially divided space to remove outdoor garments and store them, as well as a shield against the elements in inclement weather.

An integral part of the exterior walls, of course, are the windows. New heating systems, thermal glass and double glazing make tremendous glass areas highly practical in every climate. An entire glass house is perfectly feasible - only our need for privacy prevents this. Unfortunately, there is an indiscriminate use of glass areas at the moment, which is not backed up by full understanding. Large glass areas increase the apparent size of the room, making its limits the horizon not the public highway. The so-called picture window and glass wall should face a cleverly landscaped yard with full privacy - or when the house is situated properly, a long vista of hills and valleys. In this way, the miniature garden or spacious countryside become a satisfying part of the interior. By continuing the flooring pattern, as well as a correlated wall material beyond the window, this illusion can be heightened.

In connection with these large areas of glass, we must consider draperies as an integral part of the design. Natural daylight, with its attendant glare can be harsh and unpleasant during some hours of the day and during certain periods of the year. Therefore protection is required both for occupants and their possessions. The luxury of a fabric mural, created by drawn ceiling to floor draperies, is a beautiful background. Architectural provision for draperies, hardware and blinds should be built into the walls. Pockets, to receive the bulk of the drapery when not in use, can be built in beside the opening, as well as recessed hardware above the window. For this type of installation steel, aluminum or white metal I-Beam drapery track is most satisfactory among the wealth of fine drapery hardware made today.

Another built-in device which tends to add spaciousness as well as charm to small rooms, is the interior planting at the base of large windows which is repeated on the exterior and modified to suit the season.

Looking above our heads, we see that today's ceiling plays a new role - both structurally and decoratively.

The plaster ceiling of the past, is no longer the only solution. With new methods of insulation, we find that sometimes the exposed structural parts, such as cast beams, become a decorative asset. And, when oriented correctly, the technique of extending the ceiling and roof area beyond the window adds beauty and size to the interior. This effect can be pleasantly emphasized by carrying the ceiling color beyond the confines of the room, again linking the interior more closely to the garden area.

However, one of the most important functions of the present ceiling is sound absorption. With the changes in floor and wall surfaces, and the discard of many sound absorbing materials in their decoration, the ceiling takes over this requirement. Insulation and a host of acoustic ceiling materials are readily available - and decorative to boot. Many of these may be colored to suit the decorative scheme.

And speaking of color, let me stress its importance both for its decorative qualities, and its effect on human emotions. Colors that stimulate - and those that relax - must all be included in the successful home. Color adds space and light where it is most needed. Conversely, it may be manipulated to create intimacy and warmth to areas that call for that type of atmosphere.

And, when we speak of color, we also speak of texture - for the two cannot be divorced. The very same color appears entirely different when applied to various surfaces, therefore we can obtain very pleasing color effects by varying the textures. In addition, the contrast between hard and soft - rough and smooth surfaces, all lend interest and beauty to the interior design.

To round out the use of space in the home, we must also consider "light" - that invaluable safety factor in every part of the house. Today's complete wiring system calls for light-control undreamed of in the past. Today, the flick of a switch operates a light in any desired section of the house or grounds. This affords full protection as well as the saving of time to the family. Function and beauty is combined in this marvel of our age. Every interior requires the following (1) built-in and strategic lighting for the easy performance of all work activities, ranging from house-cleaning, to cooking, to reading and study. (2) light for general illumination, surrounding the social activities of the family. (3) light for beauty and drama - light that is arranged to bring out the color and texture of furnishings and to highlight the decorative features of both interior and exterior. Light, and its imaginative use, might be said to be a symbol of Western civilization and progress.

There are many other factors which we cannot hope to cover in such a short time. For instance the use and installation of the electronic facilities of radio and television is of vast importance in the new and future homes of America. Back in 1941 and again in 1948, I made a few predictions in speeches to professional groups. These predictions are just beginning to take form. We are witnessing a decided change in family life and entertaining which will continue to effect the use - and hence the design of our homes.

At one meeting, prior to the time we ourselves became involved in world-wide warfare, I made a statement which was considered rash by many of my professional friends. I quote "As to the future, I predict that after this infernal demolition is over, there will be one of the greatest upheavals of design and decoration ever known to mankind. But there are still those among us who are not designing with enough foresight to meet the standards of the coming American way of living".

We are now living in that future and have the fruits of professional experimentation and technical advancement at our fingertips.

I understand that it is the vocation of those of you gathered at this Conference, to lead the way throughout the country, to a better understanding and use of the materials and methods that have been developed for the creation of the home.

This is an activity in which I heartily concur, as I know from experience how badly this service is needed in certain areas. We all know that the level of good taste in both home furnishings and building has risen by leaps and bounds these past years.....but this change on the part of the home owner has not kept pace with the new structural materials and methods now available. The vistas that have been opened through the re-evaluation of space and the selection of new and fabulous equipment, materials and methods are infinite - and are now available for the average family.

I am sure that the avenue you are following in your teaching profession, will ultimately lead to a fuller and richer life in America.